



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, March 11, 2008

GOVERNOR TELLS LEGISLATURE: TAKE REAL ACTION ON BUDGET

PHOENIX – Governor Janet Napolitano today vetoed House Bill 2857, telling the Legislature to take real steps to solve state budget deficits for fiscal years 2008 and 2009, rather than pass piecemeal proposals that would not solve the deficit.

“Last September, I released a comprehensive budget management plan that addressed the state’s budget shortfalls and balanced the 2008 budget,” Governor Napolitano wrote in her veto letter. “Now we are over seven weeks into the legislative session and House Bill 2857 is the only bill you have delivered to me related to Arizona’s now estimated \$1.2 billion budget deficit. This bill, which lacks bipartisan support and addresses less than half of the budget shortfall amount, is wholly inadequate,” Governor Napolitano wrote.

HB 2857 would have ordered a freeze in state spending for the current fiscal year that would have accounted for less than \$600 million. The Governor has already implemented saving and spending cuts across state agencies. Last month, the Governor announced a hiring freeze in state government as a way to reduce spending. “I call on the legislature to work with me on a comprehensive, bipartisan plan that provides for Arizona’s future, taking into account our current realities,” the Governor wrote.

In September, the Governor presented a plan to close the budget deficit while protecting critical investments in areas such as health care, education, and public safety. The Governor’s plan includes three basic components: spending cuts and savings in state agencies, using some of the money in the state’s rainy day savings account, and long-term financing for the construction of new schools. The Governor continues to stress that solutions to the budget must be addressed in a way that is bipartisan and comprehensive.

A copy of the Governor’s veto letter is attached.

For more information about the Office of the Governor, please visit www.azgovernor.gov.